EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

AUGUST 2021

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ADD: Social media presence

PURPOSE

This Handbook was created to provide the employees of the Colchester Public Schools with a compilation of important district policies and procedures. Policy revisions that are made throughout the year will be provided to you through email announcements and posted on the website. The entire handbook will be reviewed on an annual basis. A current copy is also available for your review in the Staff Only Access section of the Human Resources page on our district website.

NOTICE

This Handbook serves as a general reference during your employment with the Colchester Public Schools. It is not intended to be a definitive source of information on all the terms and conditions of your employment.

The information contained in this Handbook is subject to revision based on changes in the law and/or Board of Education policies and procedures or regulations. The contents of this handbook are meant to serve as guidance and do not constitute the terms of a contract of employment or a guarantee of continued employment. There are no promises in this handbook regarding your work assignment, work schedule, specific working conditions or length of employment. The Colchester Board of Education reserves the right to revise its policies and the handbook as needed and the handbook is subject to change without notice. Of course, we believe in open communication and fairness, and will work to keep you apprised of changes about which you need to be aware in order to perform in your position.

Many school district policies and regulations have been referenced and paraphrased for the sake of brevity. Employees are responsible for making sure they are fully aware of the obligations and prohibitions contained in those policies. A copy of the complete policy manual is available from the central office and in each school.

In addition, this Handbook is not meant to change or conflict in any way with any terms and conditions of employment contained in any collective bargaining agreement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Handbook is a combined effort of our Central Office Staff and Administrators to coordinate the development of this edition of the Employee Handbook. Please contact the HR Coordinator at 860-537-7264 or HR@colchesterct.org if you have any questions about the Handbook.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Both federal and state laws prohibit discriminatory practices in hiring and employment.

The Colchester Board of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Colchester Board of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability (including, but not limited to, mental retardation, past or present history of mental disability, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

Inquiries regarding the Colchester Board of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Director of Pupil Services and Special Education
380 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415
Phone Number: 860-537-3103
Fax Number: 860-537-6391

THE DISTRICT

The Colchester Public School District is operated under the guidance of the Colchester Board of Education. The District consists of:

Administration and Support Services:
Board of Education and Central Office
(Superintendent, Curriculum, Human Resources)
127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202
Colchester, CT 06415
Phone: (860) 537-7267
Fax: (860) 537-1252

Finance and Payroll
127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 203
Colchester, CT 06415
Fax: (860) 537-7231
For Payroll inquiries: payroll@colchesterct.gov
For Accounts Payable inquiries: ap@colchesterct.gov

Department of Pupil Services & Special Education
380 Norwich Avenue (WJJMS building)
Colchester, CT 06415
Phone: (860) 537-3103

IT/Facilities Departments
315 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
Facilities phone: (860) 537-2296
IT phone: (860) 537-8324
The IT and Facilities departments are located at Colchester Elementary School.

Food Services

215 Halls Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
(860) 537-9421

SCHOOLS

Colchester Elementary School (CES)
315 Halls Hill Rd, Colchester, CT 06415
Grades PK-2
Tel: 860-537-0717
Fax: 860-537-6573

Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS)
215 Halls Hill Rd, Colchester, CT 06415
Grades: 3-5
Tel: 860-537-9421
Fax: 860-537-0349

William J. Johnston Middle School (WJJMS)
360 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, CT 06415
Grades: 6-8
Tel: 860-537-2313
Fax: 860-537-6258

Bacon Academy (BA)
611 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, CT 06415
Grades: 9-12
Tel: 860-537-2378
Fax: 860-537-5410

MISSION STATEMENT

"We Create Innovative Thinkers for a Dynamic World"

Eight simple words provide a sharp focus for all we do together as a school district and a community for every student in our schools. The most powerful word in this statement is "we," because it embodies the notion that everyone in our community plays a role in fostering the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being for students. This idea helps to frame our efforts, and determine how we focus our energies and our budget to maintain the integrity of our schools and the outstanding programs available to our students.

Our top priority is to continue to provide innovative teaching and personalized instruction to all of Colchester's 2,340 students. Inspired by our district theme of Innovation Nation, we acknowledge that students must be prepared for a dynamic work experience: one that requires them to solve problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and continuously develop the skills required for a variety of tasks. Fostering an atmosphere of innovative problem-solving provides students with strategies to transfer their knowledge and skills to new experiences outside the classroom, in a global context. This is innovative thinking.

A key component to innovative thinking is engaging our community, which is at the heart of our mission statement. Colchester Public Schools embraces partnerships with parents, caregivers, and community members to support learning while fostering pride and excitement for the well-being of all students. Colchester's measurements of success are designed to go beyond state assessments, and are directed to the need for authentic learning and problem-solving in the real world.

Colchester Public Schools are committed to establishing and maintaining strong parent-community-school partnerships to provide a safe, engaging, and effective learning environment to meet the unique needs of individual students. These partnerships are dedicated to promoting student well-being and the highest level of academic excellence measured by established performance standards and

real-world applications. We commit to a comprehensive system of support to ensure the success of each and every student.

GOALS

In order to increase student learning, our goals are as follows:

1. We will raise academic growth expectations for all students.
2. Students will develop innovative thinking and authentic problem-solving skills by engaging in rigorous tasks.
3. Our instruction and curriculum facilitate integrated, real-world learning that maximizes the individual potential of each student.
4. We will increase our capacity to respond to student academic, emotional and social needs through partnerships with caregivers and the community.
5. We align the budget with the district vision and the needs of our students.

LABOR ORGANIZATION AFFILIATIONS

Many employees of the Colchester Public Schools have chosen to be represented by a labor organization in matters concerning salaries and terms of employment. The District currently recognizes the following labor organizations as the sole representative of employees in the classifications indicated:

1. Colchester Association of School Administrators
2. The Colchester Federation of Teachers, Local #1827, AFT, AFT-CT, AFL-CIO
3. The Colchester Federation of Educational Personnel, Local #3279, AFT-CT, AFL-CIO (Paraprofessionals, Cafeteria Staff, CDAs and COTAs)
4. Local #818, Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Facilities Manager, Support Services Supervisor, Cafeteria Supervisor and Cafeteria Managers)
5. Local 1303-77 of Council #4, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (Custodians)
6. Colchester Board of Education Nurses, United Public Service Employees Union
7. Local 1303-450, Council #4, AFSCME, AFL-CIO (Office Professionals)

A copy of the labor agreement between each organization and the Colchester Public Schools is available for review on our website (www.colchesterct.org) and at Central Office. If an employee has questions about organizational affiliation, he/she should see either his/her supervisor or the appropriate union steward in their respective building.

HIRING

The Colchester Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of a person's protected class status under applicable law. Job openings are posted in accordance with the terms of the appropriate collective bargaining agreement. Job postings not controlled by a collective bargaining agreement shall be posted (at a minimum) in each building and on the District website for five days.

All applicants are required to apply using the following link,

www.applitrack.com/colchester/onlineapp. Falsifying information on the application will be grounds for removing the applicant from consideration. Prospective employees in certain positions will be required to complete a post-offer, pre-employment Human Performance Evaluation (HPE) to ensure the employee can adequately meet the physical requirements of the position for which he/she is being considered. We partner with ConCentra to administer the HPE. ConCentra is located at 10 Connecticut Avenue in Norwich.
All newly hired employees will be required to submit to fingerprinting and background checks. A criminal conviction which surfaces during the background check that has not been fully disclosed on the application is grounds for immediate dismissal.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Verification Form W9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

EMPLOYMENT

Notification of Assignment

Staff required to be notified of their assignments for each school year will be notified in accordance with the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Salary Agreements

Salary agreements for all certified staff will be sent out within the first week of school. It is the employee's responsibility to review the agreement for accuracy. The agreement must be signed, dated and returned as instructed by the stated date. It's advised that you make a copy for your own records.

Employee IDs

Every employee will be required to have their picture taken each fall by the school photographers for the purpose of an ID badge. It is our expectation that ID badges should be worn at all times.

Certified/Licensed Personnel

It is the employees' responsibility to make sure he/she completes all the necessary requirements to maintain/renew his/her professional certificate/license in a timely fashion (but not sooner than six months before the expiration for CT certification). When you have received your updated certificate/license, it is your responsibility to send a copy to the HR Coordinator so your personnel file and the district database can be updated. The Colchester Public Schools does not employ individuals who are not certified.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Calendar

The calendar for the school year is available on the district's website: www.colchesterct.org. The hours for each school are listed on the calendar.

Central Office Hours

The Central Office's hours of operation during the school year are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday (except on holidays). During school vacations and summer break the hours are 7:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Office/School Closings

Closings are posted with the local radio and television stations. In addition, the district utilizes School Messenger which notifies employees via phone/text message. It is important that employees notify the Office Professional at Central Office (860-537-7267) of any changes in information (home phone number, cell phone number) to ensure that each employee is contacted.

Website

The Colchester Public Schools website, www.colchesterct.org, contains a large volume of information such as policies, regulations, by-laws and links to each school. There is also a "Staff Access" link that, once you are logged in, opens a shared Google drive for a wide range of information and forms:

- Payroll calendars

- Financial and Payroll forms
    - W-2 - State & Federal
    - Direct Deposit
    - Insurance (Health & Life)
    - 403(b) Participation
- Leave request forms
- Conference Presenter Approval
- Teaching & Learning Calendar
- Grant application information
- Field Trip forms
- Technology documentation and forms
- Professional Leave / Reimbursement
- Course Reimbursement
- Request for Payment

Payroll Information

Time Sheets/Cards: All hourly employees are required to submit the correct time sheets/cards properly completed according to the pay date schedule. Time sheets are to only show hours actually worked. All time sheets/cards require the employee's signature as well as the supervisors/administrators.

Overtime MUST be approved by the immediate supervisor and building administrator. The reason for the overtime must be listed as well.

Absences: It is understood that absences are occasionally necessary. All absences must be reported on SubFinder (call 866-880-5393 or enter on line at Colchester.subfinderonline.com). If assistance is required please contact the SubFinder administrator at your school. For all absences other than illness or workers' compensation, a written request must be submitted on the appropriate form.

Personnel Procedures

Performance Appraisals: Colchester Public Schools endorses and implements a continuous process of evaluation of all employees of the district. Depending on your job classification (certified or classified), your supervisor will conduct at least one annual performance evaluation and provide constructive feedback. For new classified employees a performance evaluation will be conducted prior to the end of your probationary period and annually thereafter unless otherwise indicated.

Computer Usage and Electronic Mail: The school district's computer network, electronic information, and communication systems are owned and maintained by the Colchester Public Schools for educational or work-related business purposes. Use of those systems is subject to the school district's Employee Use of the District's Computer Systems Policy (4118.5 a & b, 4218.5 a & b, 6141.321 a & b).

Work-related Injuries: An employee who is injured while performing job-related duties may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. Certain steps must be taken to validate the potential claim:

1. The supervisor must immediately notify the School Nurse and forward to the Central Office, the completed Employee Injury Report on THE SAME DAY THE INJURY OCCURS.
2. The employee must immediately notify his/her supervisor of the injury, the circumstances surrounding the injury, and the nature of the injury. Failure to do so may result in the delay or potential denial of Workers'Compensation benefit by the Board of Education's Workers' Compensation carrier.
3. The Nurses office must call in the claim to the Workers' Compensation insurer **the same day the injury occurs.** If the injury occurs after hours or during school breaks, the supervisor must call in the claim.
4. The employee may receive a form 30C, Notice of Claim for Compensation from the State of Connecticut. If the employee elects to complete the 30C, it **must be turned in to the Central Office, attention Human Resources**.

For a non-serious or non-life threatening injury, the employee shall be directed to Concentra Medical Center, 10 Connecticut Ave., Norwich which has been appointed by the district as a designated Initial Care Provider. Should the district adopt a Preferred Provider Network (PPN), continuing non-emergency care will be provided through Preferred Provider physicians subsequent to visiting the established Initial Care Provider.

If the injury is serious or life threatening, the employee shall be transported by qualified medical personnel in a medically approved vehicle (e.g., ambulance, med-evacuation helicopter) to the nearest hospital or facility capable of treating the injury. The Workers' Compensation insurer must be notified if medical transportation was required.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid*, job-protected leave to eligible employees in a 12-month period for the following reasons (Policy 4252.6 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)):

- For the birth of a son or daughter, and to care for a newborn child;
- For the placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child;
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child or parent - but not a parent "in-law") with a serious health condition; and
- When the employee is unable to perform the duties of his or her position due to a serious health condition, including incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth.
- A qualifying exigency arising out of a family member's military service, including one more of the following reasons (more detailed information available upon request):
    a) A short notice deployment;
    b) Military events and related activities;
    c) Childcare and school activities;
    d) Financial and legal arrangements;
    e) Counseling;

f) Rest and recuperation;
g) Post-deployment activities; or
h) Additional duties that arise out of the active duty or call to active duty of a covered military member, provided that the District and the employee agree that such leave qualifies as an exigency, and agree to both the timing and the duration of such leave.

*Employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Arrest/Conviction and Notification: Employees of the Colchester Board of Education act as role models in our community and are representative of the district. Employees should be aware that criminal arrests or convictions that come to the attention of the Administration may be investigated by the Administration. Depending on the nature of the charges or conviction and any findings concerning the underlying conduct, employees may be subject to disciplinary action. The Administration encourages an employee arrested or charged with criminal infractions to report same to his/her immediate supervisor, particularly if the arrest may result in a disruption of the school environment. The supervisor will discuss the issue with the Superintendent, who will determine the district's course of action, if any. Per Board of Education Policy 4118.231P Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug-Free Workplace, an employee must report in writing any conviction under a criminal drug statute for violations occurring on or off school property to the Superintendent or his/her designee within five (5) days after the conviction.

Employee Records: To view the contents of your personnel file you need to contact the Human Resources Director to set up a time to do so. It is each employee's responsibility to notify the Human Resources Director whenever there are any changes in home address, telephone numbers, emergency contact or name change. For changes having to do with medical insurance, beneficiary for life insurance, or payroll changes contact payroll@colchesterct.gov.

APPENDIX A

The District has chosen to include in this manual a restatement of select Board of Education policies that are applicable to all employees. The policies included in this Appendix were in effect as of August 2021. The Board may, at any time, revise or amend its policies or adopt additional policies. Employees are responsible for adherence to the current Board policies at all times.